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Health Service for Employees of the Department of Agriculture . . .

***A Service to Promote and
Maintain Physical and
Mental Health***

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Personnel • Division of Employee Health
February 1950

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Health Service for Employees of the Department of Agriculture

What is the Department of Agriculture Health Service?

It is a service to promote and maintain the physical and mental fitness of the employees of the Department of Agriculture. The Department is interested in the health of its employees. A healthful employee in a healthy environment not only produces more and better work, but he works with greater enjoyment.

Who is Eligible for Service?

All employees of the Department of Agriculture who are employed in locations where such services have been established are eligible.

What Services Are Provided?

The services rendered by the Division of Employee Health are limited by the legislative act and the equipment and personnel available. The specific services authorized by Public Law 658 of the Seventy-ninth Congress (5 U. S. C. 150) are:

1. Treatment of on-the-job illnesses, injuries, and dental conditions requiring emergency attention,
2. Pre-employment and other examinations,
3. Referrals of employees to private physicians, dentists, and other health agencies, and
4. Preventive programs relating to health.

Treatment of On-The-Job Illnesses and Injuries

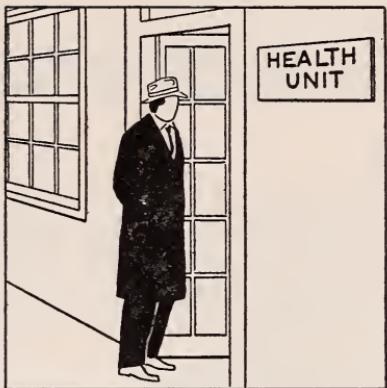
This may include simple remedies for minor complaints or vital measures taken before a seriously ill or injured employee is referred to some other health agency. This, naturally, will include a medical examination to determine if an emergency exists, the type of emergency, and the best place to refer that particular patient.

Pre-Employment and Other Examinations

The pre-employment examination, properly done, includes more than an evaluation of the individual's capacity to per-



UNHEALTHY EMPLOYEE



VISIT TO HEALTH UNIT



EMPLOYEE HEALTH UNIT



HEALTHY EMPLOYEE



DIAGNOSIS



EMPLOYEE'S PRIVATE
PHYSICIAN OR
HEALTH AGENCY

1 TREATMENT
2 REFERRAL

form the duties of the work which he is going to do. It includes an appraisal of the total health status of the individual, the early detection of illness which may be remedial, and the discovery and prevention of conditions in the individual which might adversely affect his coworkers. The other examinations will be made in connection with specific complaints, evaluations of the individual's capacity for continued work in his position, and will form the basis for health advice and guidance.

Referrals to Private Physicians

The referral of an employee to a private physician means much more than merely telling a patient to see Dr. So-and-so. It involves an evaluation of the condition to determine whether or not additional medical service is needed and in cases where the patient does not have a personal physician to aid him in choosing the proper type of medical service in a convenient location.

Preventive Programs Relating to Health

A state of good health is more than an absence of illness. It is one of the most important means of enabling an employee to do a better job. Hence, the agency should cooperate with the employee in his effort to stay well.

Five methods of preventing illness and maintaining good health through an occupational health service are:

1. To provide a healthful work environment,
2. To immunize against communicable diseases when exposure occurs on the job,
3. To give health guidance and health information,
4. To recognize illness and refer for treatment **EARLY**, and
5. To aid the employee in utilizing the community facilities which are available to him for the maintenance of his health.

Is It a Full Medical Care Program?

No. The Division of Employee Health does not provide full medical care. Examinations and treatments are given for all on-the-job illnesses and injuries. It does, however,

permit any employee with any health problem to go to the Health Unit for advice and receive such medical examination and treatment as are indicated. In conditions which are essentially chronic—nonemergency—the examination will be performed and the employee advised concerning his needs and how best to secure proper medical care.

In addition, such nonemergency treatments as private physicians have authorized in writing may be given. These treatments will be limited to those within the capacity of the Health Unit to give and will be given only when ordered in writing by a physician who is actually attending the patient. One of the purposes of this service is to reduce the amount of time the employee needs to obtain such treatments if they were given elsewhere and thereby to lessen his absenteeism.

Is This Service Available to Field Employees?

At the present time, five health units, each under a nurse, are maintained in field offices. In the absence of direct medical supervision, these units are able to give service which is limited to first aid and the care of minor illnesses.

In the Federal Center, about 10 miles from Denver, a small number of Agriculture employees are located. These employees are served by the Health Unit at that Center which is maintained in cooperation with other Departments and is directed by a doctor. It is hoped that similar units may be developed.

Is Medical Information Kept Confidential?

All medical information on employees shall be treated as confidential material. Interpretive reports may be furnished to nonmedical officials for official use, but these reports will not give the details of the illness. They will merely indicate to the official what effect the illness will have on the patient's capacity for work, necessity for leave, and when the employee will be able to return to a full duty status.

